

NEWS from



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SUPERVISORS REDUCE FEES FOR HOME-BASED BUSINESSES

SAN BERNARDINO--The San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors today voted unanimously to reduce fees charged for permits to operate home-based businesses within unincorporated areas of the County.

First District Supervisor Bill Postmus welcomed the fee reductions. "Home-based businesses are a very important part of our small business community, especially in rural areas such as those in my District," said Postmus, who had suggested the reductions as well as other Planning fee reductions approved earlier this year. "We need to continue to protect small businesses from excessive fees and regulations."

During a July 24 public hearing held prior to the adoption of a new County ordinance regulating Home Occupation Permits, Postmus also recommended changing a requirement that home-based businesses obtain annual permit renewals to a bi-annual requirement.

Today, the Board initially approved amendments to Titles 1 and 8 of the County Development Code to reduce the initial Home Occupation Permit fee from \$235 to

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FEE REDUCTIONS

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\$155. The annual renewal requirement will be changed to require renewal every two years, and the fee for renewal permits will be reduced from \$180 to \$124. Final approval of the changes is expected at the conclusion of the required public hearing on December 11.

The reduced fees reflect changes recommended by the Land Use Services Department resulting from a review ordered by the Board of Supervisors on July 24. The review estimated costs incurred by the Department through processing of the permits and completion of inspections. Inspections ensure adequacy of parking among other things.

The Board of Supervisors' July adoption of the new Home Occupation Permit ordinance resulted in generally more permissive regulations on home-based businesses in Mountain and Desert regions, while restrictions in the Valley region were generally tightened. For example, the code exempts businesses that function through phone, mail or Internet, as well as artists, music teachers and academic tutors. The previous code also prohibited non-resident employees, except for businesses located on parcels of one or more acres and zoned for rural or agricultural uses.

The new code allows one employee, and in some cases two employees in Mountain and Desert areas. In Desert parcels of five acres or larger, up to five employees may be allowed.

When the ordinance was adopted in July, there were 288 Home Occupation Permits existing within the County. Ninety-six of them were in the First District. The fee rate reduction is estimated by the Department to result in decreased revenues of \$16,500 per fiscal year. The change from annual to bi-annual renewals was estimated by the Department to result in revenue reductions of approximately \$27,000 per fiscal year.